



**THE  
COMPASSIONATE  
FRIENDS**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

# Bluegrass Chapter Newsletter

*"We need not walk alone."*  
[www.tcfbluegrass.org](http://www.tcfbluegrass.org)

**P.O. Box 647, Nicholasville, Kentucky 40340**

**January/February 2012**

## *Chapter Co-Leaders*

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**Dusty Rhodes**

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(859) 576-7680

## *Telephone Friends*

Sometimes it helps to be able to talk to someone who understands. The following bereaved parents are willing to provide support and comfort.

### **Jim Sims**

(859) 858-8288

(859) 797-2168

### **Mary Camp**

(859) 737-0180

### **Suzie McDonald**

(859) 576-7680

### **Janie Fields**

(859) 881-1991

On behalf of The Compassionate Friends of the Bluegrass we would like to say thank-you to Rick and Mavis Fryman (parents to **James Earl "Travis" Fryman** ) and let them know how grateful we are for their generous donation.

Your charitable donation will allow us to purchase much needed supplies that will directly benefit other bereaved parents. Your thoughtfulness will truly be making a difference in the lives of so many families and most all, it will continue to keep the spirit of **Travis** alive. With all the love from the deepest part of our hearts, we thank-you.

Our annual Candle Lighting Remembrance Ceremony was held Sunday, December 11, 2011, and it was lovingly shared by those of us who have a special bond. Many extended family and friends were in attendance to share in this event and give their support to us which is very important in our lives and as acceptance of our losses. Janie and I wish to thank all of those who gave of themselves to honor their children by helping us to make this Ceremony so beautiful. I am hesitant to list each person as I would be saddened if I failed to mention just one of you wonderful people who helped out.



Butterfly Hugs & Kisses  
*Suzie & Janie*

## **We welcome you with Compassion, Love and Hope**

It is always difficult to say, "Welcome" to people coming to our meetings for the first time because we are so very sorry for the reason they came. For some, the first meeting or two can be rather overwhelming, especially if they are newly bereaved. We hope that anyone feeling that way will return to at least a couple more of our meetings. Everyone is welcome to attend our meetings, regardless of the age at which their child died or the length of time that has passed since that day.

### **New to the Lexington meeting:**

Lynda Davis, mother of Jamie Davis

### **Love Gifts:**

In memory of Jeffrey Simms, given by his father, Jim Simms

**The Compassionate Friends  
National Office**  
P.O. Box 3696  
Oak Brook, IL 60522  
(877) 969-0010  
[www.compassionatefriends.org](http://www.compassionatefriends.org)

# Our Children Forever Loved and Remembered

## January Birthdates

- 1/1 **Paul Travis Hickey** Son of Al and Sandy Hickey  
 1/1 **A. Daniel Morris** Son of James and Marie Morris  
 1/2 **Jim Albright** Son of J. M. and Erna Albright  
 1/2 **Tyler Benjamin Johnston** Son of Joe and Andi Johnston  
 1/3 **Wesley Thomas (Tom) Whitehouse** Son of Betty Whitehouse  
 1/3 **John Andy Girdler** Son of Ella Girdler  
 1/4 **Joseph Lewellyn Powell** Son of Celia and David Powell  
 1/6 **Jeffrey Lynn Spradling** Son of Wilma Cracraft  
 1/7 **David Nelson Hunt** Son of Judy & Walter Hunt  
 1/7 **Benjamin Steele Truitt** Son of Charlotte Truitt  
 1/8 **David Kellemeier** Son of Pat and Robert Kellemeier  
 1/10 **J. Randall "Rand" Rogers** Son of Ron and Virginia Atwood  
 1/11 **Jason Lee Stephens** Son of Bobby and Carolyn Stephens  
 1/12 **Crystal Ann Knafl** Granddaughter of Karen and John Knafl  
 1/13 **Martha A. Moloney** Daughter of Dorothy Moloney  
 1/14 **Donald Duncan** Son of Donald and Diane Duncan  
 1/14 **Evan Scout Warren** Son of Brian and Kellie Kozee Warren  
 1/15 **Cole Brian Gilliam** Son of Joan B. Gilliam  
 1/16 **Larry Manuel** Son of Betty and Jack Manuel  
 1/20 **Jerry Denver Ison** Son of Genett Ison  
 1/21 **William (Billy) Allen Ransdell** Son of Mack and Deedee Ransdell  
 1/21 **Robin Grace Dixon** Daughter of Lenna and Letch Dixon  
 1/22 **Deana Marie Sea** Daughter of Darrell and Jean Sea  
 1/22 **Jacob Scott Harrod** Son of Mike and Cindy Harrod  
 1/27 **Weston "Ashe" Marlowe** Son of Brandi and Wesley Marlowe  
 1/27 **Mark Anthony Bishop** Son of Marlene and Mark Bishop  
 1/29 **David Julian Hunt** Son of Gail Tomblin  
 1/30 **Christian "Chris" Ford Cash** Son of David Cash

*If we have omitted your child, misspelled your child's name, or listed incorrect dates, please accept our apologies and call Janie Fields at (859) 881-1991 to correct the information. Call any of our telephone friends if you are having a hard time on these days. We truly understand your pain; for we, too, remember our own children.*

## Refreshments

Some of us like to remember our child's birthday or the anniversary of his or her death by bringing a cake or cookies to the meeting that month. We would appreciate having you bring a special treat to any meeting. You may also want to bring and share a picture of your child. Thank you!

# *Our Children Forever Loved and Remembered*

## January Remembrance Dates

- 1/1 **Eric Ritchey** Son of Lynn and Harley Ritchey
- 1/2 **Julie Ann Kirkpatrick** Sister of Roy Stewart
- 1/4 **Mark Christopher Wills** Son of John and Patricia Wills
- 1/4 **Michael Houston Finley** Son of Katy Finley
- 1/5 **Ryan Christopher Harris** Son of Larry and Patricia Harris
- 1/7 **Bart Taylor** Son of Jack Taylor
- 1/7 **David Ryan Goldey** Son of George and Julia Goldey
- 1/8 **David James Rison** Son of Karla Scott and David Rison
- 1/9 **Angela M. Meece** Daughter of Claude and Verna Meece
- 1/9 **Wesley Thomas (Tom) Whitehouse** Son of Betty Whitehouse
- 1/9 **Mitch Baber** Son of Steve and Kim Baber
- 1/9 **Donald Jeffrey Johnson** Son of Barb and Don Johnson
- 1/14 **Evan Scout Warren** Son of Brian and Kellie Kozee Warren
- 1/16 **Jennifer Lee Toadvine** Daughter of Ted and Cyndi Toadvine
- 1/17 **Howard Joseph "Jay" Crim** Son of Becky & Keith LaVey and Howard B. Crim
- 1/18 **Neil Patrick Fouch** Son of Jennifer Gray and Michael Fouch
- 1/17 **John Martin Robinson** Son of Pat and Jim Robinson
- 1/19 **Andrew Clive Cloyd** Son of Roxann Devereux and Richard Cloyd
- 1/20 **Nathan Winston Crim** Son of Becky & Keith LeVey and Howard B. Crim
- 1/22 **Julian Vincent D. Regalado** Son of Mary Frances & Ramon Regalado
- 1/22 **Corey Len Tackett** Son of Sallie Jones
- 1/24 **Nathan Charles Stamper** Son of Charlie and Missy Stamper
- 1/25 **Kevin Allen Flynn** Son of Betty and Allen Flynn
- 1/26 **Geoffrey James Chapman** Son of Maureen Chapman
- 1/26 **James Earl "Travis" Fryman** Son of Rickey and Mavis Fryman
- 1/27 **Zachary P. Stanfield** Son of Ron and Karen Stanfield
- 1/28 **Stacey Carol Sea** Daughter of Darrell and Jean Sea
- 1/28 **Shannon D. Robinson** Son of Dale and Teresa Robinson
- 1/29 **Ryan Gregory Yeiser** Son of Greg (George) and Rita Yeiser

## On Memory

When you remember me, it means that you have carried something of who I am with you, that I have left some mark of who I am on who you are. It means that you can summon me back to your mind even though countless years and miles may stand between us. It means that, if we meet again, you will know me, and hear my voice and speak to me in your heart. For as long as you remember me, I am never entirely lost.

## February Birthdates

2/1 **Kevin Brant Prenatt** Son of Susan J. Prenatt  
 2/3 **Brian Alan Frith** Son of Larry and Rowena Frith  
 2/3 **Brian J. Bergin “Bri”** Son of Robert and Sherry Lowry  
 2/6 **David Allen Rose** Son of Ralph and Carmileta Rose  
 2/7 **Jacob Issac Gibson** Son of Veronica and Darrell Gibson  
 2/8 **Keith Allen Gadbois** Son of George Gadbois  
 2/8 **Glenn Cope** Son of Sheila Cope  
 2/12 **Christopher Michael Jackson** Son of Guy and Debbie Jackson  
 2/16 **Jason Thomas Music** Son of Sandra Miller  
 2/14 **Mark Christopher Wills** Son of John and Patricia Wills  
 2/15 **Bill Varney** Son of Judy Varney  
 2/15 **Eugenia L. Morton** Daughter of Eugene and Joyce Morton  
 2/16 **Dawn Chrystine Beckett** Daughter of Mike and Lynn Lindsey  
 2/17 **Bobby Sherman Parsons** Son of Anna McKinney  
 2/18 **James Michael Farris** Son of Hulda Farris  
 2/18 **Christopher Thomas Miller** Son of Colleen and Tim Miller  
 2/21 **Stan Caudill** Son of Tom and Patricia Tschop  
 2/22 **Michael Becraft** Son of Raymond and Lucille Becraft  
 2/24 **Kristopher Ryan Gordon** Son of David and Chris Gordon  
 2/25 **Missy Fields** Daughter of David and Janie Fields  
 2/26 **Griffin Alexandar Watson-Mills** Son of Blake Mills & Candice Watson  
 2/27 **Trista Erin Lane Hail** Daughter of Bill and Debbie Lane  
 2/28 **Melody Cay Guffey** Daughter of George Foley  
 2/28 **Kimberly Sue Toye** Daughter of Gail Toye  
 2/28 **Joshua Scott Barker** Son of Deborah Barker

### In Memory of His Son, Justin Branham Written by James Willoughby

If I could cry, I'd shed an endless trail of tears  
 That would take me back in time to the day you left me here.  
 I'd kiss you on your forehead and tell you I love you so!  
 And ask God one more time, why did He take you home?  
 Since you've gone, I've not had time to grieve.  
 This life has dealt some awful blows that has knocked me to my knees.  
 But I think about you, wishing you were still here!  
 And only if I could cry, I'd shed an endless trail of tears!

**Take the love our children gave us and pass it on!**

~Darcie D. Sims  
 From FOOTSTEPS

## **February Remembrance Dates**

2/4 **Tressa Parsons Adams** Daughter of Linda and Bobby Parsons  
2/4 **Michael Terrell John Lee** Son of Vicky L. and Terry C. Lee  
2/5 **Sheena Christine Kiser** Daughter of Tina Kiser  
2/5 **James "Jamie" Earl Flynt** Son of Suzie McDonald  
2/6 **Andrea Kaye Huggins** Daughter of Jim and Sheila Huggins  
2/6 **Brandon Todd Wilson** Son of Bob and Starr Wilson  
2/13 **Jerry Denver Ison** Son of Genett Ison  
2/14 **Steven Matthew Service** Son of Ruth McGill  
2/16 **David Michael Harmon** Son of Jody Harmon & Luanne Murphy  
2/18 **Jack Charles Bahm, II** Son of Jack Bahm  
2/18 **Will Fister, III** Son of Gayle and J. W. Fister  
2/19 **David Nelson Hunt** Son of Judy & Walter Hunt  
2/19 **Allen Grant Borntraeger** Son of Doug and Cathy Borntraeger  
2/21 **Brandon Lee Lorance** Son of Callie Lorance  
2/22 **Hillary Paige Troidl** Daughter of Jim and Barb Troidl  
2/22 **Robin Lee Webb** Daughter of Ricky and Sharon Blakeman  
2/22 **Joe Collins Hisle IV** Son of Barbara and Joe Hisle  
2/24 **Crystal Ann Knafl** Granddaughter of Karen and John Knafl  
2/25 **Wicky Blakeman** Son of Mr. & Mrs. Wendell Blakeman  
2/25 **P. J. Phillip Duncan** Son of Donna Breeze  
2/25 **Ross Kemper** Son of Becky Kemper  
2/26 **Jacob "Jay" Lovenguth** Son of Jake and Markeata Lovenguth  
2/27 **Tony R. Applegate** Son of Dolly Wallce Bellomy  
2/27 **Vicki Lyn Easter** Daughter of Beulah Williams  
2/27 **Chris Rudnick** Son of Julia Rudnick-Woodall  
2/27 **Robert Riley** 5/15/75 Son of Robert & Linda Riley

## **A New Year**

**By: Shirley Ottman Bereaved Mother, Denton, TX**

A time for looking ahead  
and not behind.  
A time for faith  
and not despair.  
A time for long great gulps of hopeful expectation.  
Drink deeply friend so that  
fortified with the promises it brings,  
This New Year will keep you  
near fresh springs of healing love,  
Where you may come to weave old and loving memories  
with new understandings and acceptance...  
And find peace.



## Valentine Love-New Meaning for Bereaved Parents

Though winter's delicate, lacy snowflakes may remind us of the lace-trimmed hearts of February's valentines, the "mourning" heart seems frozen in time. The bitter winds of loneliness blow mournfully through our souls.

Death has tapped us on the shoulder, introducing his brother, Grief, who has moved into our hearts to take up unwelcome residence. Wearied and exhausted by our pain, we have little energy to evict the intruder. It's hard for us to remember that the sun still faithfully shines behind the clouds that have obscured our vision.

"Love" is apparently the thought of the season, and we are reminded of its tenderness at every turn. But a piece of the fiber of our lives has been torn away, and love seems a vague and unfulfilled promise that belongs only to others.

Hearts and flowers, lace and love, romantic verse and melody seem to have abandoned us as we grope in the darkness of our beloved's absence. Will the pain ever end? Will the hope and joy and renewal once again warm the frozen places in our hearts?

Gradually, as the hurt begins to soften, the thawing relief of healing slowly begins to melt the icy grip of our pain; hope does begin to "spring eternal". Roses, traditional in February's favorite holiday, remind us that summer will return.

It's unlikely that we will ever again perceive the usual symbols of love in quite the same way as before, but in many ways our concepts of genuine love will be stronger, richer and less assailable. Frivolous and shallow affection are absent from our thoughts. Deeper commitments and more demonstrative attention have become our new marching orders.

In costly lessons, we've learned firsthand how fragile and fleeting life can be, and we are now resolute in our determination to announce to our remaining dear ones the importance of our bonds with them. We abandon the intimidation of "limits" such as the archaic notions that "men" mustn't cry or say "I Love You" or that we're too busy just not to pay attention to someone's needs.

As little by little, our pain softens and recedes, and we learn that suffering is but for a season, we also learn that LOVE doesn't die. In our emotional lives, Valentines can now take on a new significance as precious reminders of the love that still exists on both sides of life. Love lives within our hearts and even Grief cannot steal it away. Love is our bridge over the rainbow.



### It Is a Time for Love By Margaret Gerner, BP/USA St. Louis, MO

February has fewer days than most months and that is may be of special significance to us, as our children had fewer days than most. When we think of this month, the most outstanding day, perhaps, is St. Valentine's Day. It is a time for love. When we were school aged, we had a special chance to give and receive cards in those decorated boxes in our primary classrooms. Perhaps it is the one holiday that children can really do something for everyone. Addressing a card to each and every classmate made you think of how you felt about each one and wonder about how they felt about you. Love is found in every day of every year, but February and Valentine's Day is very special. I wish I could remember just how it felt to get a "nicer" Valentine from someone I had sent a "nicer" one to. It is so long ago, and there have been so many much more significant happenings in my life. But sometimes I'd like to remember just how it felt. I am sending along this Valentine Love Note to each of you right now and hope that you know it is one of the "nicer" ones. Because each of you is very special to me. Somehow I don't wonder how you feel; somehow I know. As we grieve the loss of our children and one another's, we begin to find a different kind of love that we never expected to experience.

## A 'New Normal'

The first year after a child's death is the most difficult. In any loss, the first "everything" is always tough. Anniversaries, birthdays and holidays are guaranteed to trigger a deluge of pain and tears.

It's been two and a half years since my son died and yet the ache remains. Like amputation, parental bereavement is a permanent condition. The hopes, dreams and aspirations you had for the child now gone is lost forever.

The pain, though, subsides with the passage of time in a way. The adage "Time heals" has somehow proven true, though when my mother, who had been widowed for close to two decades, first told me about it, I was incredulous and refused to believe that it was even a possibility.

Two years down the road, when I meet friends whom I haven't seen since Migi's death, the first question that invariably crops up is "Have you recovered?" My response to that query is usually a knowing smile, quietly thinking to myself, Does anyone ever really recover from the loss of a child, or a loved one for that matter?


Perhaps "recover" is not quite the correct term. I'd like to think that "moving on" is more like it. Bereaved parents eventually find resolution to their grief in the sense that they learn to live in their new world.

Dennis Klass, professor of bereavement studies at Webster University in St. Louis, Missouri, says, "Parents who have lost a child 're-solve' the matters of how to be themselves in a family and community in a way that makes life meaningful. They learn to grow in those parts of themselves that did not die with the child. They learn to invest themselves in other tasks and other relationships. But somewhere inside themselves, they report, there is a sense of loss that cannot be healed."

From my own experience, I have learned to make the loss of my son a part of my life, and to try to forge a new meaning out of it. In the first year after he died, I would often ask myself, "What is the meaning to the loss?" I would crack my brains trying to make sense of his death. I had to find a reason, a meaning to it, or else I felt his death would have been in vain.

After a loss, be it a child, a parent or a sibling, life can no longer return to normal. Instead, in its place, a "new normal" is established. This is what I have found most helpful in my grief work these last couple of years: finding that new meaning and building a new life around the loss has helped me tremendously in moving on after his death.

For many of us, it is very difficult to let go of the pain because we sometimes equate letting go with forgetting. However, I've learned that healing, or letting go of the pain, does not mean forgetting because moving on with life does not necessarily mean that we don't take a part of our lost love with us.



To have, to love, and then to part  
Is the greatest sorrow of one's heart.  
The years may wipe out many things  
But some they wipe out never.  
Like memories of those happy times  
When we were all together.  
~ Author Unknown



Melissa "Missy" Dawn Fields

## As We Face A New Year



Instead of the old kind of New Year's resolutions we used to make and break, let's make some this year and really try to keep them:

- Let's not try to imagine the future—take one day at a time.
- Allow yourself to cry, both alone and with your loved ones.
- Don't shut out family and friends from your thoughts and feelings.
- Share these difficult times. You may all become closer for it.
- Try to be realistic about your expectations—of yourself, your spouse, other family members and friends. Each one of us is an entity, therefore different. So, how can there be perfect understanding?
- When a good day comes, relish it, don't feel guilty and don't be discouraged because it doesn't last—it WILL come again and multiply.
- Take care of your health. Even though the mind might not care, a sick body will only compound your troubles.
- Drink lots of water, eat properly, rest (even if you don't sleep), and get moderate exercise. Help your body to heal, as well as your mind.
- Share your feelings with other Compassionate Friends and let them share with you. As you find you are caring about the pain of others—you are starting to come out of your shell and that's a very healthy sign.

I know these won't be easy, but what has been? It's worth a try, don't you think? Nothing to lose and perhaps much to gain.

## Wishes For Bereaved Parents for the New Year

### Joe Rousseau ~ TCF President 1990

To the newly bereaved: We wish you patience-- Patience with yourselves in the painful weeks, months, even years ahead.

To the bereaved siblings: We wish you and your parents a new understanding of each others' needs and the beginnings of good communication.

To those of you who are single parents: We wish you the inner resources we know you will need to cope, often alone with your loss.

To those experiencing marital difficulties: After the death of your child, we wish you a special willingness and ability to communicate with each other.

To those of you who have suffered the death of more than one child: We wish you the endurance you will need to fight your way back to a meaningful life once again.

To those of you who have experienced the death of an only child or all of your children: We offer you our eternal gratitude for serving as such an inspiration to the rest of us.

To those of you who are plagued with guilt: We wish you the reassurance that you did the very best you could under the circumstances, and that your child knew that.

To those of you who are deeply depressed: We wish you the first steps of the "Valley of the shadow."

To all fathers and those of you unable to cry: We wish you healing tears and the ability to express your grief.

To those of you who are exhausted from grieving: We wish you the strength to face just one more hour, just one more day.

To all others with special needs that we have not mentioned: We wish you the understanding you need and the assurance that you are loved.



## How Can I Find Relief? From “A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance”

Some people see the process of grief and healing as a journey through a gigantic maze. It feels like there may be many ways in, but the way out is well hidden and difficult to reach. There are seven key turns to successfully negotiate the maze of healing.

1. Having the experience. This is the entry point.
2. Owning the experience as a loss. This means not denying it, pretending it doesn't hurt or minimizing its importance.
3. Willingness and readiness to walk the path of healing. The timing of healing is a very individual thing.
4. Hurting. There is no quick fix and no path that allows us to avoid the pain. We must face the pain and experience it.
5. Expressing and not repressing the hurt! That means finding a support system or a friend who is willing to let us experience and share our feelings. This isn't always easy. Many times our family and friends want to fix it by finding us a shortcut. There are no shortcuts to grief.
6. Assessing and re-evaluating ourselves and the situation. It may seem to delay our progress, but it's a necessary part of healing. Early in grief it feels like we'll never survive long enough to find the end of the maze. But then, somewhere down the path, we find ourselves having our first good belly laugh and feeling guilty about it. Later we may find ourselves laughing without even thinking about it or going the whole day without thinking about the pain. That's because we are moving into the final stages of healing and nearing the end of the maze.
7. Learning to live with a redefinition of self. This final step requires finding ways to reinvest our emotional energy, rather than having all of our energy stuck in re-experiencing the loss. This takes place slowly over time. Expect successes but also setbacks and readjustments.

There is no straight line of healing from loss. In fact, there are multiple routes, including dead ends and blind spots. There are detours that cause us to change direction often leaving us feeling lost and confused. Some of the potential detours take us through shock, denial and disbelief. Others may draw us into paths of anger, depression and despair. These dangerous detours can make us withdrawn and bitter – even destructive. If we can't find a way to turn around and reconnect with the main path, this detour is a sign of complicated grief-grief that may need special attention. Ideally, in navigating the maze, we will learn much about ourselves. We'll leave the maze with a new depth of character-a new definition of self that prepares us to move into the future.

## There's A Valentine Waiting for You By Mary Cleckley

There's a Valentine waiting for you, that's different from all the others. It's there every month at our meetings. Of heartbroken fathers and mothers. Its envelope is made of caring. The glue of understanding seals it tight. This non-judgmental group who've been there, help to take away your fear and fright.

So, come join with us together, read your living message printed clear.  
In not only this month's valentine, but all those throughout the year.



## Normal

It is amazing what can become "normal" to us.....

Normal for me is trying to decide what to take to the cemetery for Christmas, Birthday, Valentine's day and Easter.

Normal is also not hardly being able to bare the thought of Jesus dying on the cross because of what it did to his mother.

Normal is that extra chocolate Easter bunny sitting on the counter because you always get your children a chocolate bunny, and this year you still bought one for the one who is not here.

Normal is sitting at the computer crying, sharing how you feel with chat buddies who have also lost a child.

Normal is feeling like you know how to act and are more comfortable with a funeral and being at the cemetery where your son is buried, than a wedding or a birthday party. Yet, feeling a stab of pain in your heart when you smell the flowers, see that casket, and all the crying people.

Normal is feeling like you can't sit another minute without getting up and screaming cause you just don't like to sit through church anymore. And yet feeling like you have more faith and belief in God than you ever have had before.

Normal is going to bed feeling like your kids who are alive got cheated out of happy cheerful parents and instead they are stuck with sober, cautious people,

Normal is having tears waiting behind every smile when you realize someone important is missing from all the important events in your families' life.

Normal is not sleeping very well because a thousand 'what ifs' and 'why didn't I's' go through your head constantly.

Normal is having the TV on the minute I wake up and the last thing on before I go before I go to sleep at night, the need for noise because the silence is deafening.

Normal is every happy event in my life always being backed up with sadness lurking close behind because of the hole in my heart.

Normal is each year coming up with the difficult task of how to honor your child's memory and their birthday and survive those days. And trying to find the balloon or flag that fits the occasion.

Happy Birthday? Not really.

Normal is my heart warming and yet sinking at the sight of that ugly plant in the front flower bed

Normal is disliking jokes about death, funerals. Bodies being referred to as cadavers when you know they were once someone's loved one.

Normal is being impatient with everything, but someone stricken with grief over the loss of their child.

Normal is feeling a common bond with friends in England, Australia, Netherlands, Canada and all over the USA, but yet never having met any of them face to face.

Normal is a new friendship with another grieving mother and meeting for coffee and talking and crying together over our children and our new lives and worrying together over our living children.

Normal is being too tired to care if you paid the bills, cleaned house or did laundry or if there is any food in the house.

Normal is wondering this time whether you are going to say you have 3 or 4 children because you will never see this person again and it is not worth explaining that one of

Them is in heaven and yet when you say only 3 to avoid that problem you feel horrible as if you have betrayed that child.

And last of all normal is hiding all the things that have become normal for you to feel, so that everyone around you will think that you are "normal".

## Holidays Are Behind Us

It is the new year. The holidays are behind us. We did with them what we could. Whether they were a time of sorrow, a time of joy, or a combination of both, they are now a part of our memories. In a strange way, as a memory in our hearts and in our minds, our child's place is there among all the other memories of the season. There is hurt along with the memory, but also a thankfulness for the memory.

Now we look out at the winter landscape. The earth is cold, the land sharply defined. Yet underneath the hard crust, the energy and warmth of our earth is guarding and providing life to all that grows. We may personally know the coldness and hardness of a grief so fresh that we feel numb – a grief so hurtful that our body feels physically hard, our throats tight from tears shed or unshed, our chests banded tightly by our mourning heart.

If we are not now experiencing this, our memories recollect so easily those early days. Yet, as we live these days, like the earth from which we receive our sustenance, we too, in our searchings, find places of warmth and change and love and growth deep within. Let our hearts and minds dwell in these places and be armed and renewed by them, and let us have the courage and love to share them with our loved ones, to talk about even that first dim shape of new hope or of new acceptance or of new understanding or of new love.

These are the new roots, born of our love for our child, that are forming and stirring within, gathering strength so that our lives, at the right time, can blossom once again and be fruitful in a new and deep way.

### *Wintersun*

#### The Poems of Sascha Wagner

#### Dedicated to Randy Misita, Son of Bernie and Tony, brother of Angela

There are those days in winter  
 When your world is frozen  
 Into a vision of eternal ice,  
 When earth and air  
 Are strangers to each other,  
 When sound and color seem forever gone.  
 There are those days in winter  
 When you feel like dying,  
 When life itself surrenders you to anguish,  
 To total mourning and to endless grief.  
 And then it happens: from the bitter sky,  
 A timid sun strides to his silent battle  
 Against the grey and hostile universe –  
 It changes ice to roses, sky to song.  
 And then it happens that your heart recalls  
 Some distant joy, a gladness from the past  
 A slender light at first, then larger, braver,  
 Until your mind returns to hope and peace.  
 Let memories be beauty in your life,  
 Like song and roses in the wintersun.

### Meeting Information

#### Lexington

First Tuesday of Every Month  
6:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m.  
Hospice of the Bluegrass  
2321 Alexandria Drive  
Lexington, Kentucky



#### Winchester

Third Tuesday of Every Month  
7:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.  
Hospice East  
417 Shoppers Drive  
Winchester, Kentucky

### Meeting Format

Doors open one-half hour before meeting times to provide the opportunity to visit with old friends and acknowledge new ones. Please plan to arrive early so the meeting can begin on time.

## How Long Will This Pain Last?

~ *Author Unknown*

*"How long will this pain last?"* a brokenhearted parent asked me. *"All the rest of your life."* I had to answer truthfully. We never quite forget. No matter how many years go by, we remember. The loss of a child is like a major operation, part of us is removed and we have a scar for the rest of our lives. This does not mean the pain continues at the same intensity. There is a short while at first when we hardly believe it; it is rather like we have a cut our hand, we see the blood flowing, but the pain has not set in yet. So when we are bereaved there is a short while before the pain hits us. But when it does, it is massive in its affect. Grief is shattering. Then the wound begins to heal It is like going through a dark tunnel. Occasionally we glimpse a bit of light up ahead, then lose sight of it awhile, then see it again and one day merge into the lights. Then, eventually, we are able to laugh, to care, to love. The wound is healed, so to speak, the stitches are taken out, and we are whole again; but not quite. The scar is still there and so is the scar tissue. As the years go by, we manage. There are things to do, people to care for, our living children, tasks that call for our full attention. But the pain is still there, not far below the surface. We see a face that looks like our son/daughter, hear a voice that echoes, see a photo in someone's album, see children playing in the school yard, boys playing football, girls looking pretty, and it is as though the knife were in the wound again. But not so painfully, and mixed with joy too. Because remembering a happy time is not all sorrow; it brings back happiness with it. How long will the pain last? All the rest of your life, but the pain gets softer, much less intense. The thing to remember is that not only the pain will last, but the blessed memories as well. Tears are the proof of life. The more love, the more tears. If this be true, then how could we ask, that the pain cease altogether. For then the memory of love would go away with it. The pain of GRIEF is the PRICE we pay for LOVE.

#### The Compassionate Friends Credo

We need not walk alone. We are The Compassionate Friends. We reach out to each other with love, with understanding, and with hope. The children we mourn have died at all ages and from many different causes, but our love for them unites us. Your pain becomes my pain, just as your hope becomes my hope. We come together from all walks of life, from many different circumstances. We are a unique family because we represent many races, creeds, and relationships. We are young, and we are old. Some of us are far along in our grief, but others still feel a grief so fresh and so intensely painful that they feel helpless and see no hope. Some of us have found our faith to be a source of strength, while some of us are struggling to find answers. Some of us are angry, filled with guilt or in deep depression, while others radiate an inner peace. But whatever pain we bring to this gathering of The Compassionate Friends, it is pain we will share, just as we share with each other our love for the children who have died. We are all seeking and struggling to build a future for ourselves, but we are committed to building a future together. We reach out to each other in love to share the pain as well as the joy, share the anger as well as the peace, share the faith as well as the doubts, and help each other to grieve as well as to grow. We Need Not Walk Alone. We are The Compassionate Friends.